

CLAIMS

Sub 17

1. A golf ball comprising:
a body comprising a spherical outer surface having a first shape, first diameter, and first hardness which cooperatively cause the golf ball to have a first performance characteristic;
at least a portion of the spherical outer surface comprising a material that changes from at least one of the first shape, first diameter, and first hardness upon being immersed in water continuously for a time period less than one hundred eighty days so that the golf ball has a second performance characteristic that is different than the first performance characteristic.
2. The golf ball according to claim 1 wherein the spherical outer surface has a plurality of dimples formed thereon.
3. The golf ball according to claim 1 wherein the body comprises a core and a cover layer around the core and defining the spherical outer surface.
4. The golf ball according to claim 1, wherein the spherical outer surface has a radial dimension and the cover layer has a radial thickness that is not greater than one-third the radial dimension of the spherical outer surface.
5. The golf ball according to claim 1 wherein the material defines the entire spherical outer surface.

2 6. The golf ball according to claim 1 wherein the material defines less than the entire spherical outer surface.

2 7. The golf ball according to claim 1 wherein the material comprises a polymer.

8. The golf ball according to claim 1 wherein the time period is less than thirty days.

9. The golf ball according to claim 1, wherein the material changes from the at least one of the first shape, first diameter, and first hardness by melting.

10. A golf ball comprising:
a body comprising a spherical outer surface,
the golf ball having a normal state in which the golf ball has a first performance characteristic,
the body comprising a material that changes from a first state with the golf ball in the normal state into a second state as an incident of the golf ball being immersed in water continuously for a time period less than one hundred eighty days,

the material in the second state causing the golf ball to have a second performance characteristic that is different than the first performance characteristic.

11. The golf ball according to claim 10 wherein the material changes from the first state into the second state by melting.

12. The golf ball according to claim 11 wherein the spherical outer surface has a plurality of dimples formed thereon.

13. The golf ball according to claim 10 wherein the body comprises a core and a cover layer around the core and defining the spherical outer surface.

14. The golf ball according to claim 13 wherein the spherical outer surface has a radial dimension and the cover layer has a radial dimension that is not greater than one-third the radial dimension of the spherical outer surface.

15. The golf ball according to claim 13 wherein the material defines the entire spherical outer surface.

16. The golf ball according to claim 13 wherein the material defines less than the entire spherical outer surface.

2 17. The golf ball according to claim 10 wherein the material comprises a polymer.

2 18. The golf ball according to claim 10 wherein the time period is less than one hundred eighty days.

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2 19. The golf ball according to claim 10 wherein the body comprises a core and a cover layer around the core and the core comprises the material.

2 20. The golf ball according to claim 10 wherein the body comprises a core and a cover layer with an outer surface and further comprising a capillary communicating from the outer surface to the core.

2 21. The golf ball according to claim 20 wherein the capillary has a degradable material therein.

2 22. The golf ball according to claim 20 wherein the core comprises the material and the capillary communicates from the outer surface to the material.

2 23. The golf ball according to claim 22 wherein the material defines only a portion of the core.

24. The golf ball according to claim 23 wherein the core has a center and the portion of the core is at the center of the core.

25. The golf ball according to claim 23 wherein the core has a center and the portion of the core is spaced from the center of the core.

26. A golf ball comprising:
a body comprising a core and a cover layer with an outer surface,
the body comprising at least one capillary communicating from the
outer surface of the cover layer to the core.

27. The golf ball according to claim 26 wherein the core comprises a hollow portion in communication with the at least one capillary.

28. The golf ball according to claim 26 wherein the capillary is at least partially filled with a material that changes from a first state into a second state as an incident of the ball being immersed in water continuously for a time period less than one hundred eighty days.

29. The golf ball according to claim 26 wherein the golf ball has a normal state in which the golf ball has a first performance characteristic, the core comprises a portion in communication with the at least one capillary that comprises a material that changes from a first state with the golf ball in the normal

6 state into a second state as an incident of the golf ball being immersed in water
continuously for a time period less than one hundred eighty days,

8 the material in the second state causing the golf ball to have a
second performance characteristic that is different than the first performance
characteristic.

30. A method of playing golf, said method comprising the steps
of:

providing a golf ball having a normal state wherein the golf ball has
a first performance characteristic and a second state resulting from immersion of
the golf ball in water for a time period less than one hundred eighty days in which
the golf ball has a second performance characteristic that is different than the first
performance characteristic;

striking the golf ball into an accumulation of water using a golf club;
and

10 allowing the ball to remain immersed in the accumulation of water
sufficiently that the golf ball is caused by the water to be changed from the first
12 state into the second state.

31. The golf ball according to claim 30 wherein the time period is
2 less than thirty days.